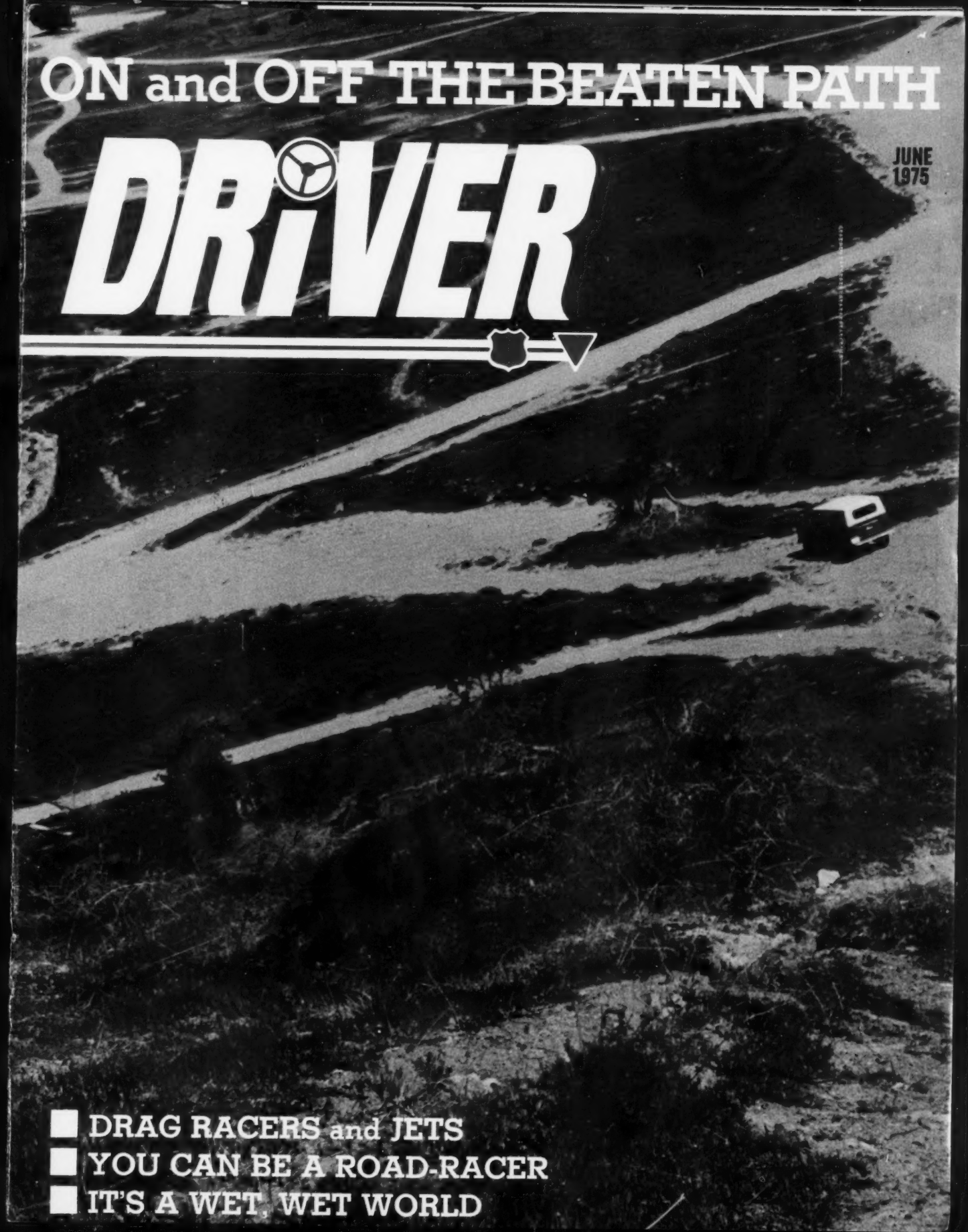
ON and OFF THE BEATEN PATH

DRIVER

JUNE 1975



- DRAG RACERS and JETS
- YOU CAN BE A ROAD-RACER
- IT'S A WET, WET WORLD

DRiVER
ON
OFF

and the Beaten Path

Will this be the summer you decide to get out and really enjoy a vacation in the great outdoors? Well, if you're planning to "get away from it all" in a national park or monument, be sure to make your arrangements and/or reservations early. All indications are that lodging facilities and improved campgrounds will be at least as crowded this year as last.

But maybe you're planning to get more away from it than in a national park. Could be you're planning to really get out into the boonies, possibly even into Canada or Mexico.* Well this could be even better . . . as long as you're *prepared* for travel off the beaten path. Just getting into the back country can be a real experience for most of us who aren't used to driving on bad roads, much less unpaved ones. And you're not going to find a service station every couple of miles if you venture into the back country. For that matter you can't even count on anybody coming along to help you out of trouble in some areas. So being super-prepared is the only way to go.

For travel to Canada or Mexico be sure to make the required special travel arrangements such as car insurance and registering of foreign-made goods before leaving the U.S.

CAR PREPARATION

You should always get your car in good shape before any trip. But obviously it's essential to have your vehicle in top condition before heading into back country. Take the vehicle to a mechanic or diagnostic center for a thorough checkout well before you plan to leave. This way you'll have plenty of time to get all necessary repairs and maintenance taken care of. And don't hesitate to fix, adjust, or replace any parts or functions that are at all questionable.

In addition to taking care of any mechanical problems revealed in the inspection, pre-trip preparation should include a complete check of the cooling system. If the coolant is more than a couple of years old or is especially rusty or scaley, the system should be flushed and replenished with the proper coolant mixture. Be sure to check all radiator hoses and heater hoses for condition and make sure the clamps are tight.

continued

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THE EDITOR SPEAKS

DOUBLE CLUTCH

NEW OR USED? BUY OR RENT?

Some Food for Thought on Buying a Car

Getting your money's worth out of a car is important these days when even an "inexpensive" car calls for a lot of dollars. But how can you make a prudent choice about a car when there are so many ways to go and so many things to consider?

An Air Force officer attending a graduate-level course in Systems Analysis conducted a study of the matter and in 95 pages of things like probability curves and density function parameters, none of which we pretend to understand, came up with some solid advice. Captain Roger Luzut, taking account of original costs, finance charges, rental prices, maintenance costs and other significant factors, makes these recommendations:

- If you are interested in an economy-class car, buy a year-old used car and keep it three years, or buy a new car and keep it for 100,000 miles.
- A "low-mileage driver" (8,000 miles a year) who wants a regular or luxury class car should buy it new and maintain it for 100,000 miles.
- For medium mileage rates (16,000 miles) the regular-size car should be bought as a one-year-old used car, replaced every three years.
- For high-mileage (24,000), buy a used car every three years or, if a newer car is desired, consider rental as a reasonable alternative.

NEXT MONTH
Auto Repair Rip-Off

Check to be sure the thermostat operates properly and that the radiator cap seals correctly. Overheating is one of the leading causes of road breakdowns. But a lot of overheating problems are simply the result of a faulty cap. It might not be a bad idea to spend a couple bucks and replace the cap just to be sure. Inspect all drive belts for proper condition and tension.

Naturally you'll want to have the engine tuned, air and gas filters replaced, and all emission systems checked and serviced. Don't forget an oil and filter change and a complete lube job including a check of the differential and transmission fluid levels. A couple of other essential items to check are tires, brake system, front end, wheel balance, and shock absorbers. Remember that your car is going to be taking a rougher than usual beating in the back country, so basics such as proper lubrication and good brakes, tires, and shocks are even more essential. Also, remember to increase tire inflation to carry the additional load and check the tire regularly. Other important checks are included in the chart in Figure 1.

TOWING?

If you will be towing a trailer or traveling in a rec vehicle there are a lot of special checks and procedures you should know about. If you don't, go talk to the local RV dealer to get the lowdown on these items. One of the most important things if you're going to be towing is making sure the hitch is properly attached.

JUST IN CASE

Once you get the vehicle prepared to take on the toolies, the next step is getting prepared for a "just-in-case." Long trips off the beaten track require equipment you might not normally have in your car. Even though back roads get populated during vacation season, you can't really count on too much help in event of a breakdown when you're hours from anywhere. And chances are you'll be able to get yourself going again with the right equipment and a little bit of knowledge. In addition, you'll feel a lot more comfortable on back roads knowing you're prepared for most any problem. Here are some of the items you should have along just in case:

- First-aid kit with instructions.
- Flashlight with extra battery and bulbs. Large lamp with red warning beacon is best.
- Spare sealed-beam headlight unit, spare light bulbs for taillights etc., and box of fuses.
- Spare fan belt.
- Spare gas filter.
- Universal-type flexible radiator hose for emergency use.
- Sealed tuneup kit, including points, condensor, and rotor.
- Dry chemical fire extinguisher—preferably mounted inside the vehicle.
- Properly inflated spare tire.
- Towing cable or chain.
- Collapsible shovel.
- Tire chains (if you're heading into potential snow areas such as mountains).
- Can of gasoline—if it can be mounted on luggage rack or in a trailer. If it can't, carry an empty can—do not carry gasoline in the trunk because of fire hazard.
- Five gallons of water in clean containers for emergency personal or cooling system use.
- A few quarts of oil.
- Electrical tape, wire, battery jumper cables.
- Blanket—preferrably fireproof.
- Plenty of matches in waterproof container.
- Tools—If you're the backyard mechanic type you may want to take your entire tool set along. But a supply of basic tools should get you by in an emergency. A basic assortment should include a working jack and lug wrench, both blade and phillips screwdrivers,

continued

Fig. 1 MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Tires—Replace as necessary.

Tread depth—Tread wear indicators not visible.

Tread wear—Uneven wear—wheel alignment or balance problem.

Lights—Operate properly, including turn signals.

Engine—Tuned, air and gas filters replaced as necessary, oil and filter changed, emission system checked and serviced.

Wipers—Do not streak or stick to windshield. Windshield washer filled and operating.

Cooling system—System properly filled. Radiator and heater hoses in good condition and properly clamped. Thermostat operating properly.

Battery—Full charge, clean, dry, correct water level, connections tight and clean.

Drive belts—Good condition and properly tensioned. Spare fan/alternator belt in car.

Brakes—Master cylinder topped off—hydraulic system checked. Brake operating properly. Recent inspection?

Automatic transmission—Shifting properly? Fluid proper color and level.

Transmission/Differential—Correct fluid level.

Exhaust system—Sound, no leaks.

Shocks, wheel bearings, front end—Car rides, handles, and steers properly. Bearings serviced.

(far right)
Back-country navigation requires plenty of preplanning with the help of maps and guides. Topographic maps which are a must for hiking and backpacking are also helpful for route planning in the boonies. They show roads, trails, towns, and other cultural features as well as elevations and natural features. These invaluable maps are available at state and national parks and monuments, at camping supply stores, and through the U.S. Geological Survey, Denver, Colorado 80225.

pliers and vise grips, pocketknife, and basic wrench assortment plus at least one adjustable wrench.

So now you have all the equipment needed to bail yourself out of an emergency, but you may not know what to do with it all. Well, that's no problem —check Figure 2 for list of the most common causes of auto breakdowns and what to do about them. And even if you don't know what to do yourself, somebody just may come along who can get your car going if you can furnish the necessary equipment.

ROUTE PLANNING

Now, the next step is knowing precisely where you're going and how to get there. If you're planning to do any hiking, climbing, or backpacking at your destination, you're going to need some topographic maps of the area. So get the maps before you leave and study them along with road maps to plan out your route. One of the most important things for back road travel is planning your fuel stops. Estimate your mileage figures on the downside and pinpoint your fuel stops accordingly. Don't vary from these scheduled pit stops.

Also, from studying the top sheets develop a feel for the terrain you'll be traveling through and note landmarks such as towns, rivers, peaks, and fire stations. By knowing what to expect on your route, you can be sure you're on it, or at least have an idea of where you're at if you get off it. Finally, when traveling the back country, check weather reports frequently and watch local conditions yourself. Typical back country roads can become impassable very quickly in heavy rains. You can get mired down for days if you're not careful. So it's best to find a comfortable camp site to weather summer storms.

Well, if you've made all your preparations, you're ready for the fun part of getting into the boonies—driving the roads. Probably the majority of the roads you'll be traveling will be paved or at least sort of paved. On the rutty "chuckholed," narrow, blacktop roads that abound in back country areas, the only trick is to slow down, drive carefully, and try to avoid as many of the holes as possible. But you're probably not going to get where you're going and back without driving some gravel and/or dirt roads.

GRAVEL

Driving on gravel is quite a bit different from driving on paved roads. First, drive more slowly since traction is less, and hitting chuckholes and ruts at faster speeds will increase the wear on your car's suspension system and tires. These little furrows of gravel can be a nuisance, and even dangerous. Don't panic if you hit a gravel windrow; just grasp the wheel firmly. The gravel will turn the wheel, but don't try to make a quick correction; just allow the car to climb the gravel. This will help slow you down. Then brake slightly and ease the wheel back down. Keep going at a slower speed.

By far the most damaging aspect of gravel travel is rocks thrown up by passing cars and trucks. A pair of headlight guards purchased before you leave will save yours sealed beams, but there is little you can do to protect the windshield except to reduce speed and stay well over to the right of oncoming vehicles.* Dust can be harmful to your car's engine, so grab the air hose at a service station every time you stop for gas and blow the dust out of the engine compartment. Also, check the air filter regularly.

NARROW ROADS

Many unpaved roads are only one lane and a half wide, and passing oncoming vehicles can be a real problem. Usually there are turnouts or wide spots placed for each line of sight—courtesy requires the car with the turnout on his *right* to yield the right-of-way. It's also courteous to turn out

**You might also consider covering the car with heavy cardboard to protect the finish from flying rocks. Appliance box panels cut up and held in place with heavy tape work best.*

continued

(right)
A full stock of emergency equipment is also a must for travel in the boonies.

Fig. 2 COMMON CAR PROBLEMS AND CURES

OVERHEATING—Stop in the shade, leave the engine running, shut off the air conditioner and turn on the heater. Turning on the heater is like adding an additional radiator since coolant circulates through the heater core. Visually check the hoses and fan belt. If the hoses are not leaking and the fan belt appears to be tight enough, run the engine at a fast idle for about 5 to 10 minutes. If this doesn't reduce the engine temperature, shut the engine off and let it cool. Then using a heavy cloth to protect your hand, very carefully release the pressure from the radiator cap and remove it. Restart the engine and fill the radiator with water. Drive slowly to a service station.

WET IGNITION—In rain wet spark plugs and cables can short out, causing the engine to stall. Wipe spark plugs, cables, and the top of the ignition coil with a dry rag. If the engine fails to start, remove the distributor cap and carefully dry the points and the inside of the cap.

CLOGGED FUEL SYSTEM—Dirt in the fuel line or trapped in the gas filter can stall an engine or cause very rough operation. If there's no gas going to the carb and you're sure there's gas in the tank, remove the air filter and use a rag or piece of cardboard to protect your hand from possible backfire and hold your palm over the carburetor while someone operates the starter. This may unplug the fuel line. If gas still doesn't flow, replace the gas filter after the engine has cooled to prevent fire. If gas still doesn't come through the line, you probably have a faulty fuel pump.

VAPOR LOCK—Vapor locks are not common today, but still occur in extreme heat; especially after the gas tank has been overfilled (in hot weather have the attendant stop short of filling the tank all the way to the cap). Stop in a shady place and put a wet rag on the fuel pump and fuel line to cool and condense the vaporized fuel.

ELECTRICAL FAILURE—A car may stall or fail to start because of a bad electrical connection, a shorted circuit or blown fuse. The most common problem is a loose or heavily corroded battery cable. If everything is dead (no lights or power) clean the battery cables and tighten the clamps. Then check all electrical connections. If the car still won't start, check the fuses. If all fuses are good, and you still don't have any juice, there is probably a short somewhere in a circuit.

BROKEN FAN BELT—If you don't have a spare belt, you're in trouble. Without a fan belt the car will overheat and the generator will quit. Walk or hitch a ride to the nearest phone or service area. If you're close enough, you may be able to drive the car slowly to a service station stopping every few minutes to let the engine cool.

FLOODED ENGINE—Gas smell usually indicates flooded engine. Let the car sit for a few minutes, remove air cleaner and flip choke open. Crank engine until it starts. Install air cleaner before driving.

IGNITION FAILURE—If your car conks out and there's gas going to the carburetor, you've probably got an ignition problem. Knowing a little about cars will be helpful here. But some of the most common problems are a loose coil wire and broken rotor or distributor cap. If the coil wire is in place, remove the distributor cap and check for cracks. If the cap is okay make sure the rotor is not broken. Then check to see that all wires are in place and the points are opening and closing when the engine is cranked over.

EMPTY FUEL TANK— One of the most common causes of breakdown. Start hitching for gas.

Wandering animals of all sizes and types can be a hazard in the back country.

(left)
During bad weather or on back roads it's especially important to place warning signals in the event of a vehicle problem on the road. See article for more information.

when someone behind wants to travel faster than you.

Mudholes, rocks on the road, and stream fordings are tricky spots that should be scouted on foot before you commit the car to them. Make sure there is a place wide enough to turn around beyond the hazard before proceeding, so that you won't have to back through it later if you run into an impassable blockade. For guidance when clearance is questionable, post a passenger outside in a spot where he can see clearly beneath the car. To get more traction over mudholes and short, abrupt rises, move the passengers to the backseats, thus increasing the weight over the rear wheels.

You can gain more clearance over obstructions by having everyone get out of the car. If you do get stuck, you may be able to "rock" the car out using forward and reverse gears. Second gear is much better than low for this because it is less likely to spin the wheels. When stuck in loose material you can also let air out of the tires to get additional traction. But unless you have an air pump to refill the tires, save this trick for a real emergency situation since you may ruin the tires if you have to drive very far with them underinflated.

OTHER PROBLEMS

Engine overheating can be avoided on steep stretches if you make the climb in the lowest gear possible for the speed you are traveling. If you stop in the middle of a long climb, give the engine a chance to cool before restarting it, or leave it running. An overheated engine should be *left alone* until it has had a chance to cool—*never* remove the radiator cap on an overheated engine. And don't pour cold water onto a hot engine or into the radiator, because you can crack the block.

Overheated brakes can be avoided by following an old truckers' rule: descend a hill in the same gear you would use to come up it, letting engine compression do some braking.

ANIMALS

All wildlife can present a hazard on the road. But deer are the worst. Most often you'll see them on the road or highway at night; attracted by the strong and steady light of your headlamps, they'll stop dead in their tracks to stare. If you round a curve and find a small herd straddling the road, apply the brakes as hard as safety will allow, to lessen any inevitable impact. But if there's time, flick your headlights from low to high beam and back again rapidly, hitting the horn in short staccato bursts. This should disperse the herd, but you'll still need some skill to avoid a collision as they scatter. There is another resident of the North Country that doesn't scare quite so easily and that's the moose. Should you encounter an antlered bull, stop and let him go his way, for he can make short work of your car.

In the event you do have a problem on a back road, you should immediately set out some flares or reflectors so that traffic has plenty of time to slow or hopefully stop to help you. If you're unfortunate enough to conk out on a major highway, things could be a little hairier.

Well, we certainly hope you don't have any kind of problems on any road, so that you thoroughly enjoy your vacation either on or off the beaten path. But just in case, here is a list of reminders from Volkswagen for people who have problems on a high-speed highway. Many of the tips also apply for breakdowns on back roads.

Use your flashers—The turn signals on most late-model cars convert into four-way emergency flashers. The boldly blinking flashers warn oncoming drivers of obstructions or dangers ahead and help to minimize the danger of rear-end collision.

Find the best place to stop–If your car is disabled, steer to the right and get out of the traffic lanes, as far from the action as possible. If you have a flat, drive on it until you can get to safety even if you ruin the tire in the process.

Abandon car if possible– If you and your passengers can bail out of the car safely, you should get away from the road shoulder to a protected place, such as behind a guard rail or up on an embankment. It is particularly important that children be removed from the danger area.

Don't take risks—In heavy traffic, don't attempt to get out and try to divert oncoming cars. Just leave the flashers on, hope that the traffic will flow around your car, and wait for help. Remember, many roadside accidents occur during attempts to change a tire or make car repairs. It's far safer to wait for help from police or a road-service crew.

Use warning devices when necessary—Most authorities now believe you should use warning signals only when the position of your car makes it a hazard for oncoming traffic—that is, when it's smack in, partly on, or dangerously near a normal traffic lane.

In most instances where warning devices are called for, you should place the device 40 paces (100 feet) behind your car. However, exact placement depends on the situation. If your car is parked around a curve from oncoming traffic, the warning signal should be positioned so that drivers can see it before they get into the curve. In some cases, the most sensible place for a reflector-type device is on the top of your car, where extra height may make it more visible.

KINDS OF WARNING DEVICES:

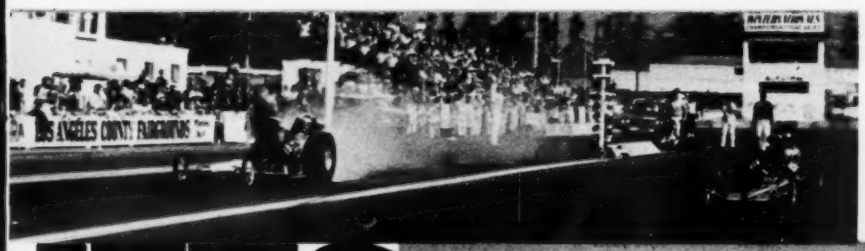
Flares—(Not recommended).—Safety folks now take a fairly dim view of flares. Though they're compact, highly visible and cheap, they're also dangerous. Lighted flares should never be anywhere near an exhaust system, heater outlet or anything else that's flammable, and in untrained hands, they've been known to ignite cars, brush, and people.

Portable Flashlight-type Blinkers—(A good choice). These run on batteries, flash a red light and are impervious to the elements.

Triangle Reflectors — (Preferred). These metal-mounted lenses pick up the headlight beams of an oncoming car and bounce back a bright red light.

Flares last approximately 20 minutes, portable blinkers require periodic battery replacement and triangular reflectors last just about forever.

Drag Racers and



JETS

Ten long, low silhouettes caught the attention of visitors to March Air Force Base, California, at a recent Open House. Seven were sleek T-38 supersonic jet trainers used by the USAF Air Demonstration Team, the "Thunderbirds." The other three were very fast, but nonflying, cars from the drag-racing circuit. They were brought together by the Air Force recruiting service detachment for photographs to be used in enlistment publicity.

Public Service

Bob Bommarito, driver of the top fuel dragster, and funny car driver Tom Ridings have been providing their cars to West Coast recruiters as a public service. The recruiters believe the interest generated by the public appearance of the cars often attracts young men and women to talk to the recruiter, who can point out the obvious similarities between the lightweight, streamlined machines and the Air Force aircraft.

Captain Douglas W. McCartney, Detachment 610 Advertising and Publicity Officer at San Bernardino, California, feels that the use of the dragsters has been a real attention-getter.

"We've used the cars with recruiting displays in malls, public airshows, Air Force Base open houses and even on high school campuses," he said. "Wherever they appear, they attract attention and put the recruiter in touch with a lot of young men and women with whom he might not otherwise get a chance to talk. When the cars are on display, everybody stops to look. A recruiter doesn't have anything else that will stop traffic like that.

"We don't sponsor the car. The racers pay their own expenses and own their own cars. But when they race, it's added publicity for the Air Force."

The cars will appear at most of the drag racing events in the southwest during the current racing season.

While the car-and-plane exhibit was in place at March AFB, the drivers and "Thunderbird" pilot Doug Roach had a chance to talk—about their jobs and about planes, cars and safety. Here are their comments.

Safety on the "Job"

Captain Douglas C. Roach

USAF "Thunderbirds," Nellis AFB.

Doug now flies the slot or rear position for the air demonstration team. He earned his pilot's wings in February 1966, when he was selected as the outstanding officer graduate of his pilot training class. He won similar honors during combat crew training in the F4 fighter. After serving tours in Germany,

continued

The T-38 supersonic jet and the top fuel dragster have a lot in common, including the Air Force paint job.

Southeast Asia and Florida, he joined the "Thunderbirds" in 1973. He moved into the right wing slot in 1974 after spending his first year as logistics officer.

"I think that flying with the Thunderbirds is safer than driving on a highway. There are several reasons.

"Our pilots get a minimum of 30 training flights consisting of two-, three- and four-ship formation maneuvers for those that fly the diamond (four-ship) formations. Normally 60 flights are scheduled between the time a new demonstration pilot is assigned to the team and the first flight.

"The biggest plus in flying with the same group of pilots is the ability to predict the mental and physical state, as well as the basic skills, of those with whom you are flying. We are able to fly as close and low as we do, in safety, because the pilots are selected in part on the basis of their physical health and mental stability.

"Another reason is equipment maintenance. If people took care of their cars like our crew chiefs take care of our aircraft, there would be far fewer accidents and cars breaking down enroute.

"One safety feature is that our smoke system insures that the demonstration pilots can see one another and that stray aircraft, who may be unaware of the scheduled demonstration, can see and avoid the site.

"The aircraft haven't been modified too much otherwise. A closed loop oil system has been added to insure an adequate supply of oil to the engines at "G" loadings less than one "G." We also have backup communication and navigation systems.

"We wear fire resistant flight suits, helmets, gloves, and seat belts to provide as much safety as possible.

"Predictability is a big safety factor. We have two basic shows, a high one and a low one. Which one we fly is determined by the actual cloud coverage. Other than minor deviations in altitude and airspeed, each of those shows is always flown exactly the same.

"Other things do vary enough to keep you on your toes and insure that each performance is different from the preceding one. I guarantee that you never get bored. Every day is new and different. That's the reason it's a great job."

Russ Uppman

Lakewood, California.

Russ is driver and co-owner of an econorail dragster that he campaigns in Southern California. His brother, Master Sergeant Bob Uppman, works as a recruiter in Pullman, Washington, and was the key factor in obtaining the cooperation of the racers in this project.

"I'm sitting with the transmission between my legs, so I'm very concerned about it staying together. The 'Not-So-Econ' has the required safety blanket around the transmission. It's made of nylon, asbestos and wire mesh, and has three straps holding it on. The blanket weighs 20 to 30 pounds.

"We also have shielding around the U-joints for extra safety.

"There is a safety chute on the car, although we normally don't need to use it because we don't have the tremendous top speed of the top fuel cars.

"The most important thing we do is thoroughly check out the entire car between races. You also need to know your car intimately as a driver. I can often tell when I'm driving—by hearing or feeling—that something is not quite right, in time to prevent it from breaking."

Tom Ridings

Long Beach, California.

Tom is just beginning his career as part owner and driver of the class BB funny car "Rolling Thunder." A student at Long Beach City College, he is 20 years old and works parttime at his father's automobile agency.

"Funny cars have to have more safety built in than other types of dragsters because they can be more dangerous. The driver sits inside the one-piece fiberglass body with the engine in front.

"I have three freon-filled fire extinguishers in the car. Two are by the motor and one in the driver's area. I can release them with a button. They spray an atomized mist that really smothers the fire, even at high speed.

"My fire suit is made of Nomex, five layers of it. It can withstand 2,000 degrees of heat. I wear a helmet and mask that completely protects my head and face.

"The five-point seat harness has a strap between the legs and over the shoulders as well as around the hips. Everything releases with one catch.

"This type of equipment is mandatory because of the safety rules of the racing associations like the National Hot Rod Association and the American Hot Rod Association.

"Checking the car over before each race, and in between each run, is as important as having the right equipment. A good check includes handles, cables, and connections as well as motor parts. It's kind of like preflighting an airplane. When I drive, I listen for strange sounds or new vibrations. If things don't sound or feel right, I start looking."

Bob Bommarito

Huntington Beach, California.

Bob mixes the two most important things in his life: his love for racing and his love for his family. Wife Marilyn is one of the crew whenever he races and drives the push vehicle to get the racer started. Bob has been racing since 1953, graduated to top fuel cars in 1972.

"I'm a family man and intend to stay as safe as possible. All my equipment meets or exceeds SEMA (Speed Equipment Manufacturers Association) requirements.

"My motor is behind me, minimizing the danger from fire. But I still wear a three-layer Nomex suit. I wear a two-layer head 'sock' under my helmet, and have five layers of Nomex in my gloves and high boots. Those areas are especially vulnerable to high heat. The outfit is designed to resist 1800 degrees of heat for one minute.

"When it comes to my head, I buy the best helmet available. It's fully padded and covered with Nomex inside.

"The car is light, but the chrome molly chassis tubing is heli-arc welded to provide a protective roll cage around me. The fuel tank is also behind me. The steering column is a two-piece breakaway unit to provide protection in case of a front-end crash. I wear the same kind of five-way safety harness as Tom.

"Another feature that the car has is a floater rear end. It prevents the rear wheel from falling off in case of a broken axle. That increases safety when you're putting such high stresses on the car at over 200 miles per hour.

"Getting stopped is always a concern to the super-fast cars. Tracks have a barrier, but you risk getting the car messed up. My fueler has double disc brakes on each side. My SEMA-approved parachute can brake the car from 235 mph to 50 mph in just 1000 feet.

"Other than good, safe equipment, I'd say that most safety at the track is just good common sense. That and experience. You don't have much time to act when something goes wrong at 200 mph. You react and you'd better be right. Experience comes from working your way up, starting with 'door-slammers' and gradually increasing your ability. I started driving a 1953 Ford when I was 17. I've worked my way up to a top fueler in 1972, and I built most of it myself.

"I think the careful licensing required of each driver is important, too. For example, the National Hot Rod Association requires you to be checked out in the class of car that you will be driving in meets. You actually make several runs, including one at full speed, which are observed by NHRA officials, strip managers, or other licensed drivers. You must prove to them that you can safely drive your car. And you must pass a physical before you can finally get your racing license.

"That's why I think that racing is safe, despite some obvious situations that could be dangerous. I enjoy drag racing and I have fun. My wife is my partner, treasurer, secretary and comes to most meets with me. So it's a family hobby for me. What more could I want?"

Safety on the Road Safety on the Road Safety on t

Capt Roach

"To me, the best approach to minimizing danger on the highways is through education. Make people aware of the danger that they face on the highway. I remember hearing a statistic while I was in Los Angeles over the holidays, that one out of every six drivers on the freeway was intoxicated, even though the alcohol content of their blood hadn't exceeded the legal limit. It made me drive much more defensively during my stay.

"I always drive defensively, so that I always have an out. And I don't take chances. There is rarely a case where the extra five miles per hour or passing that one car, makes much difference. There is always that next stop light that catches you, or another slow car ahead of the one you just passed."

continued

Fig. 1 Comparison Chart

Type:	T-38 Supersonic jet trainer	Class BB Funny Car	Top Fuel Dragster	Class BE/D Econorail
Nickname:	TALON	ROLLING THUNDER	THUNDERBIRD	NOT-SO-ECONO
Owner:	U.S. Air Force	Tom Ridings and John Langraf Long Beach, CA	Bob Bommarito and Morris McKinney Huntington Beach, CA	Russ Uppman and Bill Carter Lakewood, CA
Driver:	Capt Doug Roach, USAF	Tom Ridings	Bob Bommarito	Russ Uppman
Top Speed:	830 mph	200 plus mph	230 plus mph	154 mph
Weight:	7700 lbs.	1850 lbs.	1450 lbs.	1080 lbs.
Power:	5800 lbs. thrust	1400 hp.	1800 hp.	500 hp.
Engine:	Turbo Jet (2)	480 cu. in. hemi	426 cu. in. hemi	363 cu. in.
Transmission:	None	3-speed manual with reverse	2 speed with underdriver	automatic with reverse
Length:	46 feet 4 inches	17 feet	22 feet	19 feet 6 inches
Fuel:	JP-4 Jet Fuel	Alcohol	Nitro Methane (90%) Methonal Alcohol (10%)	Gasoline

Bob Bommarito, Russ Uppman, Capt Douglas Roach and Tom Ridings looking over the class BB funny car.

ty on the Road Safety on the Road

Russ Uppman

"I always consider the most dangerous thing on the highway to be the other driver. He's a 'maybe,' because you never know what he's going to do. The best way to watch out for him is to keep your speed reasonable, leave lots of room and watch on both sides and in the back as well as out front."

Tom Ridings

"The most dangerous time in drivin on roads and highways is when you're driving long distances. You've got to be physically fresh and stay aware of what's happening. Don't let yourself be 'mentally asleep.'

"You have to give driving your complete attention. Like on the dragstrip, you must physically and mentally concentrate all the way from point A to point B. If you develop the habit, it will become automatic."

Bob Bommarito

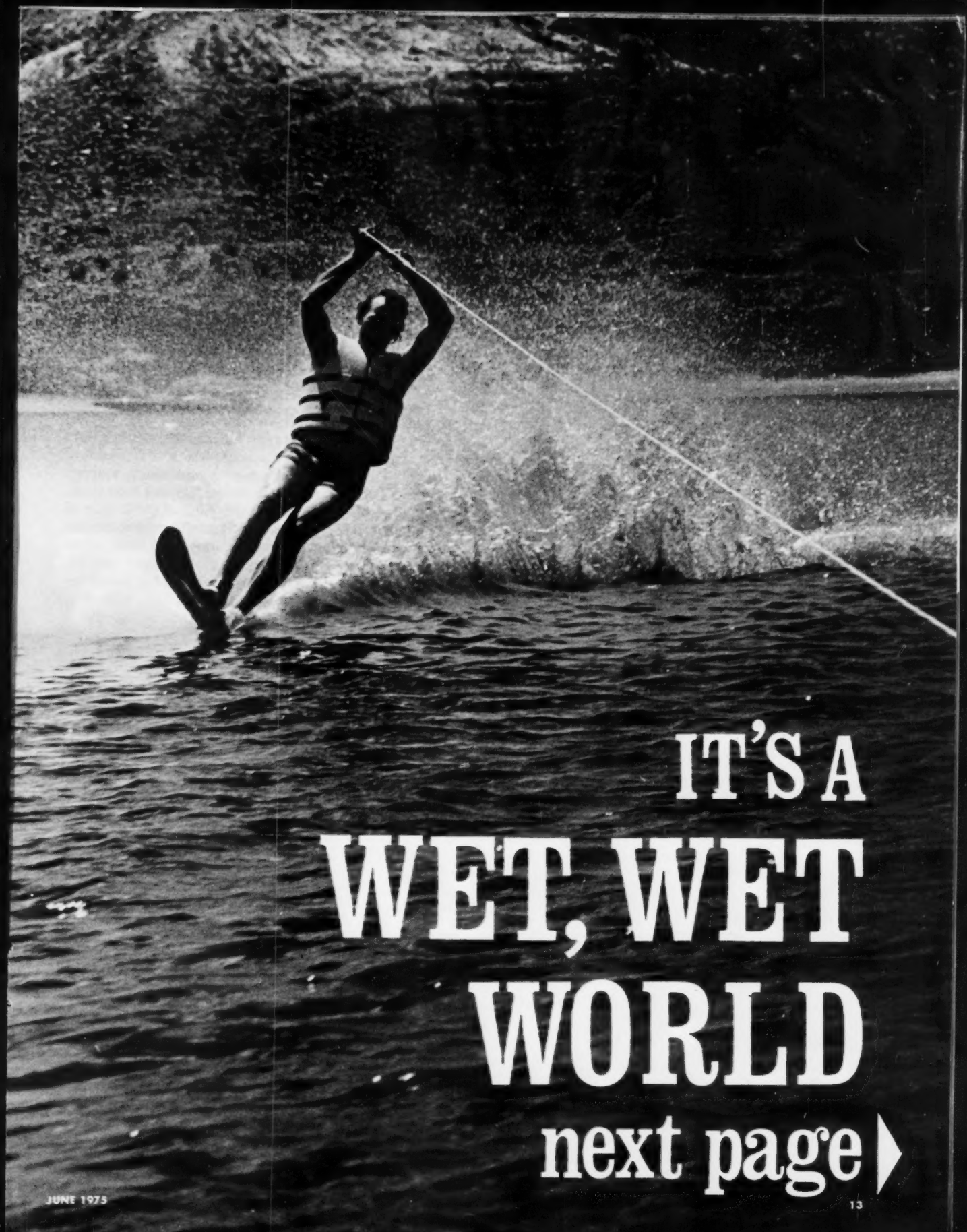
"I think it's very dangerous to drive too slowly on the freeway. You see people driving far below the speed limit, but staying in the faster lanes. The danger comes when all the cars coming up from behind start having to make lane changes to get by.

"Towing a trailer also requires extra safety precautions. I guess I'm especially aware, because we tow the trailer with the fueler a lot.

"I make it a practice to allow twice as much room, and twice as much time, as I usually do. That's because when you're towing, everything is exaggerated and happens slower. With our long trailer, we need a couple of extra car lengths when we pass before we can cut back. And we accelerate slower, which is very important to remember when you're just coming onto a freeway into heavy traffic. So . . . just allow yourself more time and room.

"When towing, you're over in the lane with those big trucks. But don't tailgate them and figure you can stop just as fast. They have airbrakes on at least eight wheels, and you have hydraulics on maybe six, if your trailer has brakes. No way you can stop as fast. Leave plenty of extra room.

"And remember, when towing you really have to practice your defensive driving. There are four directions to check before you act, and you'd better check all four."


IT'S A
WET, WET
WORLD
next page

Hang around the boating crowd for a while, and you'll soon discover they fall into two separate types. First there are the people—sailing fans are an example—who just like boating. They spend winter evenings taking small boat handling classes from the Coast Guard Auxiliary. In summer, they're blissfully polishing brass, mending sails, and talking about their boats.

Then there are the other boaters, the ones who are a lot more interested in the sports the boat opens up for them than in the boating itself. These are the water skiers and the fishermen, and they are the big reason for the American boating "boom."

CAN YOU SWIM?

No matter which kind of boater you are, no matter whether you own your own or bum an invitation from buddies, or just rent a row boat on vacation, you should know how to swim.

Pools and good instructors can be found almost anywhere, even in the smallest communities.

And, you don't have to think of swimming as a life-saving skill, even though that's why we're pushing it. Think of it as fun, which it certainly is. Or as great exercise. Swimming will soon reward you with long, beautiful muscles and a generally improved physical condition. So what's your excuse?

GETTING THE BOAT TO WATER

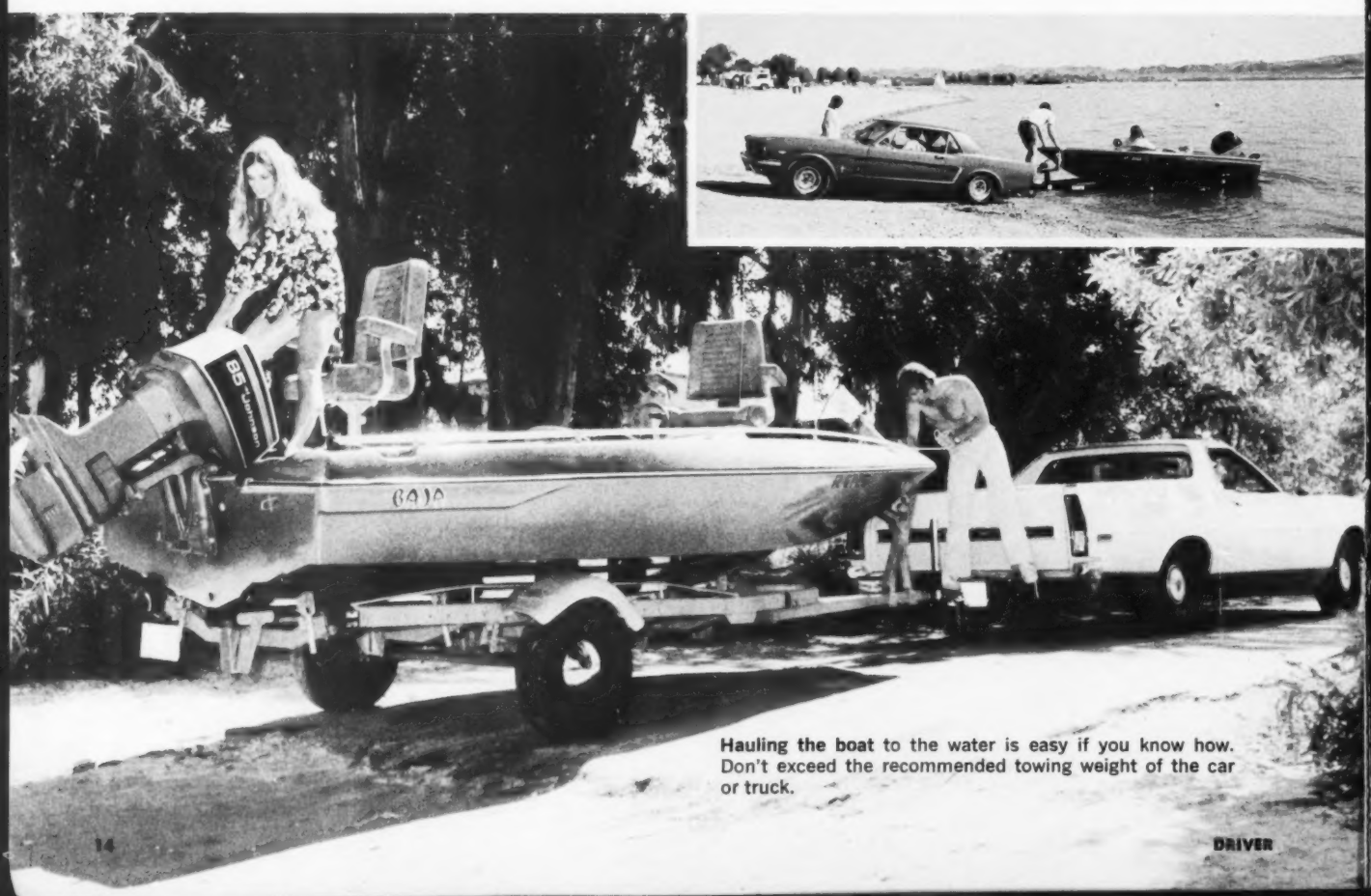
Unless you're loaded with the heavy metal and can afford to keep your boat in a marina, the first task is getting the boat to the water. There are millions upon millions of acres of pleasure boating waters in the United States, and getting there can be part of the fun if you use a little common sense.

First, match the rig to the tow car. With today's interest in small automobiles, it's easy to exceed the car's recommended towing weight. Obviously, big cars can pull small boats but small cars shouldn't tow big boats. A good rule of thumb is to choose a boat/trailer combination of about the same weight as the towing vehicle.

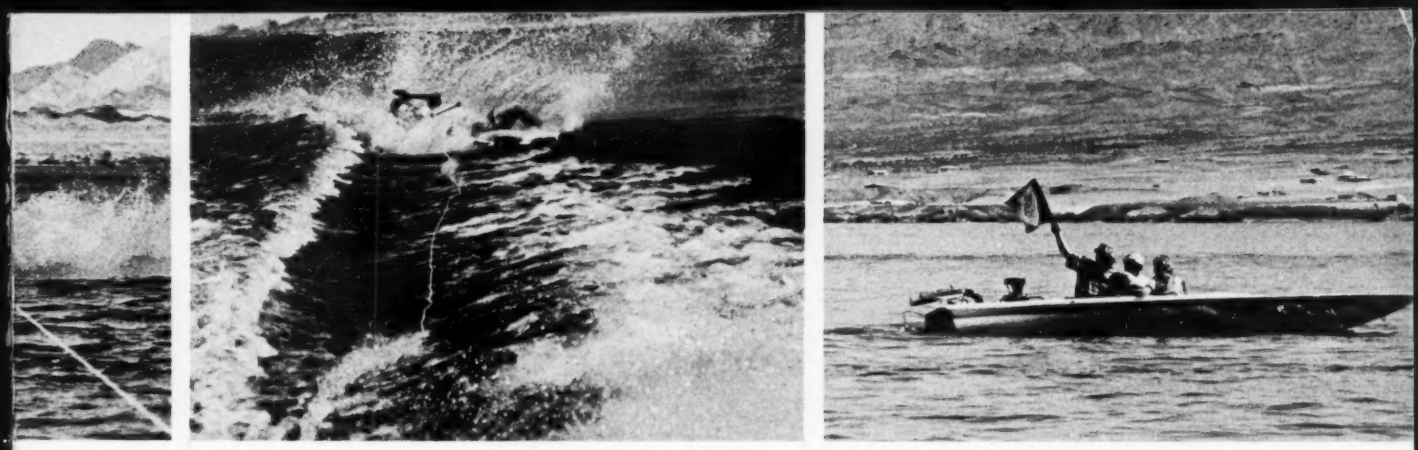
Consider, too, the special towing equipment packages offered as an accessory to most automobiles. These usually include such options as heavy-duty battery, alternator and cooling systems; "workhorse" gear ratios; anti-sway and anti-skid devices; and stiffer shock absorbers.

Make sure the trailer hitch is strong enough to do the job, and then some. The strongest hitch is one that is welded to the car's frame. For smaller rigs, a heavy-duty bolt-on hitch should be sufficient.

Choose the right kind of trailer for



Hauling the boat to the water is easy if you know how. Don't exceed the recommended towing weight of the car or truck.



your boat. Different hulls need different trailer rollers and supports. What's good for a cathedral-type hull isn't good for a deep-V and vice versa.

And don't forget that the heavier the load, the harder it is to stop. Most trailer people recommend electric or hydraulic trailer brakes on any load over 800 pounds. Remember, too, to check the equipment before each trip. Be sure all the trailer lights—running, brake and directional—are working. And *always* check, then double-check, the hitch and safety chains.

Towing a properly equipped trailer is easy. A little practice, particularly in negotiating turns and backing, and you're on the way.

WATER SKIING

If this is the summer you're determined to get up on water skis, a few tips will make it easier.

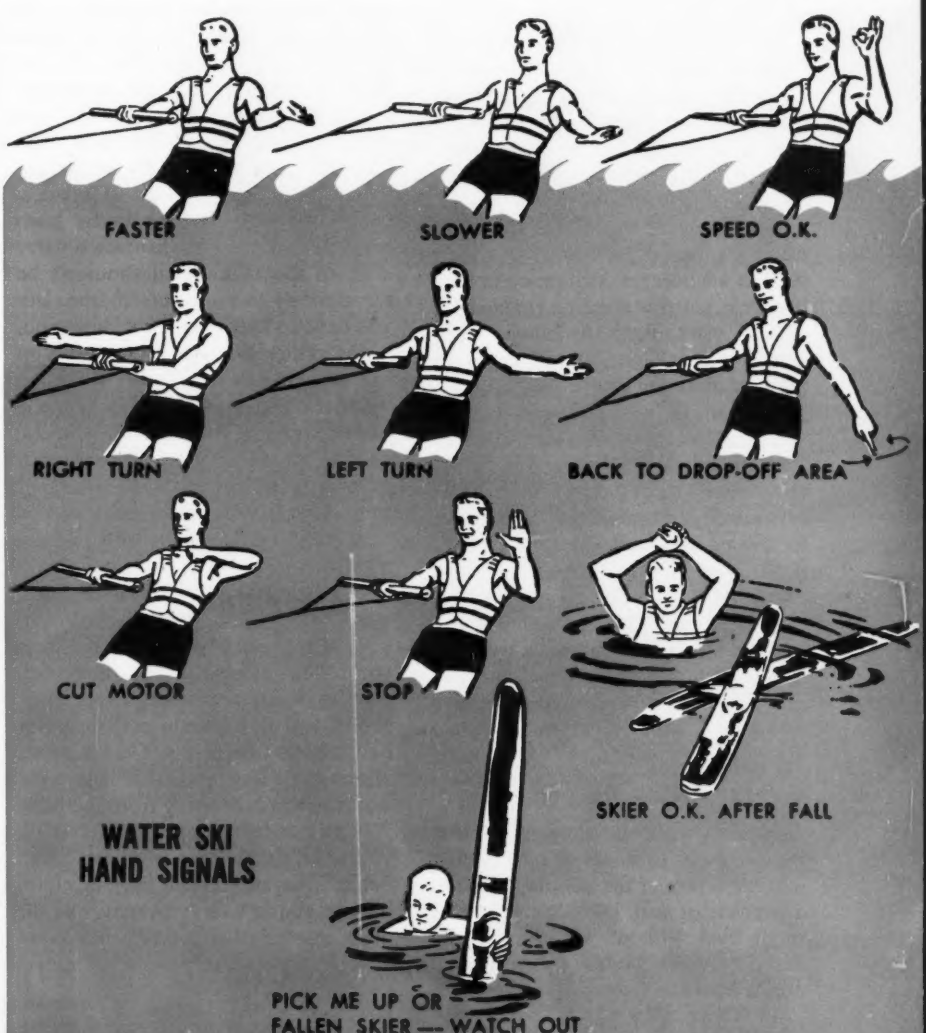
"Arms straight, knees bent," is the rule heard most often, and it's good advice. But before heading out into deep water, a little on-the-beach, dry run is in order.

With the towline held by an instructor or friend, and with the beginner's feet firmly in the ski binders (*and* with an approved personal floatation device, properly worn) the beginner should sit on the backs of the skis, with feet flat on the skis, knees against the chest and arms straight, all the while holding the ski handle.

The person holding the towline then pulls gradually. As the line tightens, the beginner rocks forward and stands up, keeping his feet flat in the binders. Practice this several times before attempting the real thing, to get the correct feel and timing.

continued

When towing a skier, have the observer keep an eye on boat traffic as well as the skier. Some inexperienced boaters will follow dangerously close behind a skier. Also get the skier flag in the air immediately to warn other boats whenever a skier is in the water. Here, the skier is up but in trouble—skier is down—flag is up immediately. When approaching a boat with a flag in the air, locate the downed skier, then signal by raising your arm with the fist clenched.



Once you get out into the water, remember these simple *don'ts:*

Don't lean forward when you rise up on top of the water in your skis. Keep your back straight.

Don't pull hard on the towline to keep your balance. Let the boat do the work.

Don't lock your knees in a straight position. Keep them slightly bent, to help absorb the bumps of rough water or boat wakes.

Don't be afraid of falling. Too much concern can psych you into a spill. Falling is supposed to be part of the fun.

When a boat is towing a skier, there should be a person in the boat at least 12 years old, in addition to the operator, to watch the person being towed. Some states allow the operator to use a wide-angle, rear-view mirror instead of an observer.

Passing the towline over another vessel or skier, or navigating between a vessel and its tow is prohibited. Towing water skiers from sunset to sunrise is prohibited in most states unless there are local laws establishing special hours.

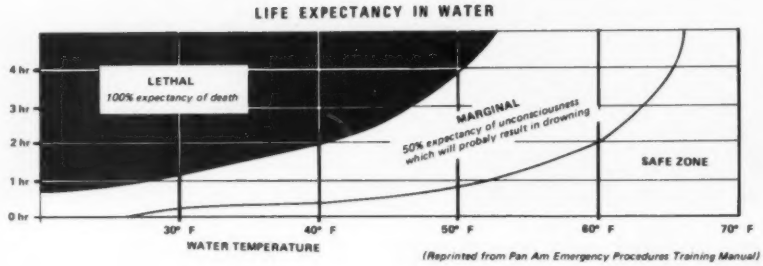
Skiers should never be towed in heavily traveled or restricted waters such as anchorages, swimming or fishing areas, narrow winding channels or around piers, floats or buoys. They should wear a Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device.

When a skier tumbles, the boat should come about and approach him from the lee side. The operator should stop the engine before taking the skier on board and should be careful not to swamp the boat. In smaller craft it is usually safer to take a person aboard over the stern.

If you are skiing on cold water—such as a deep lake—wear a wet suit. You'll be more comfortable, and you may have a better chance to survive in case of accident as we'll explain later.

BOATING FOR FISHING

In any small boat, remember that the best way to board is by stepping into the center of the bottom, not onto a gunwale or seat. Don't stand up in a small boat without hanging on and don't rock the boat for fun. If you rent a boat for fishing, look for a decal that says it has been examined by the Coast Guard Auxiliary. The decal is your assurance that the boat meets safety regulations.



(Reprinted from Pan Am Emergency Procedures Training Manual)

Fishermen can get fishing lines tangled around the propeller, outboard engine or anchor line. In trying to free these lines they often lean too far over the side and fall overboard. To make things worse, fishing lines get tangled around a fisherman who has fallen in the water, interfering with his ability to swim. It takes a cool head not to panic under such conditions. Since most fishermen carry a sharp sheath knife, it shouldn't be too difficult to cut yourself free. But you have to keep your wits about you.

Fishermen often get so wrapped up in the sport that they forget about the weather. You may be fishing on the sheltered side of an island or in a cove and be surprised by water conditions when you arrive on the unsheltered side. Always wait in sheltered waters until sea conditions improve before trying to make it home.

If you are fishing in relatively cold water, don't just carry a lifejacket, wear it! Should you suddenly find yourself overboard in 60° water, unable to reach the safety of boat or shore, you will remain conscious for only about two hours. Colder water allows even less time. This is because water drains heat away from the body 20 times as fast as air. Don't strip off your clothes so that you can swim better. The air trapped in your clothing can add to your buoyancy, and the extra insulation will more than compensate for the restriction of movement.

The key thing to remember is that you want to get out of the water before you become unconscious. Once that happens, you can't be sure that even the best personal floatation device will prevent the water from lapping into your nose and mouth and drowning you.

Whether to swim to safety or wait for rescue can be a tough decision. If the shore is very far away, you'd better wait for help. You can't swim very far in cold water. And swimming or exercising will force more blood to your muscles, which means that body heat will be lost faster. Over the short run—less than 20 minutes—exercise probably won't have much effect, positive or negative, on your body temperature. But over the long run you're better off remaining still until you're rescued.

Incidentally, some people are unable to stabilize their body temperature even in 75° water. So, the temperature at which water becomes dangerous is a very individual matter.

This exposure danger is another good reason for the fisherman (and the hunter) to be sure that his boat is in good condition and not overloaded. The ideal boat has positive buoyancy. This means that it should float even if filled with water or capsized. If you can use the boat as a raft to keep your body out of the water, you're ahead of the game.

THE COAST GUARD

The Coast Guard is to your boat what the Highway Patrol is to your car, only more so. The Coast Guard

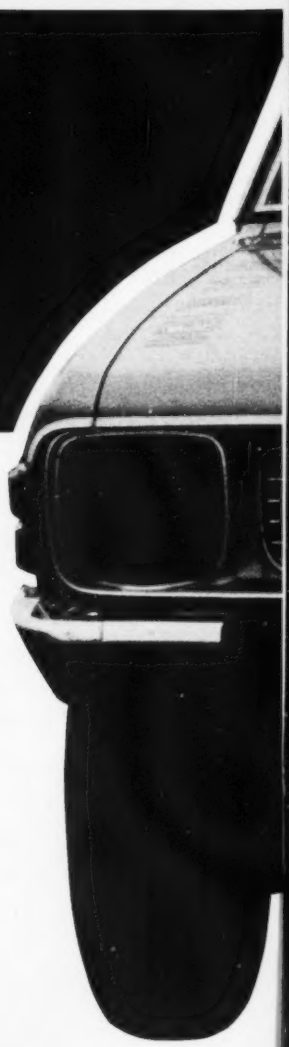
continued on page 28

Fishing for bass on a pleasant day—but that water is probably a lot colder than the air. How long could these men survive in the water?

The Coast Guard Boating Safety Detachment (BOSDET) cruises recreational waters. They give verbal warnings and tickets just like highway patrolmen. In many areas, boating accidents **tripled** last summer. Coast Guard blames carelessness.

Now you can compete in a stock two-seater or subcompact sedan under SCCA auspices, have fun, and learn to be a safer street driver all at the same time. Here's how.

YOU CAN BE A ROAD-RACER



by
Captain Jim Gandy
Pease AFB, New Hampshire

People find a lot of different ways to become better drivers. One way, perhaps the most exciting and personally satisfying, is to become an amateur road racer. Learning how to control a skid, how to stop a spin, how to maintain a car for maximum safety and dependability—road racing teaches all of this.

It's too bad that all this education and fun usually comes at a pretty high price. Running an average racing car in any of the 21 race car classes of the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) can easily set you back four to five thousand dollars in one year, even if you don't have an accident or blow an engine. And that's for a machine that is just an adult's toy, suitable for competition only.

There *is* an answer to the high cost of racing. The SCCA has created two new classes, referred to as Showroom Stock, specifically to make road racing accessible to more people. Showroom Stock Sedan (SSS) is for sub-

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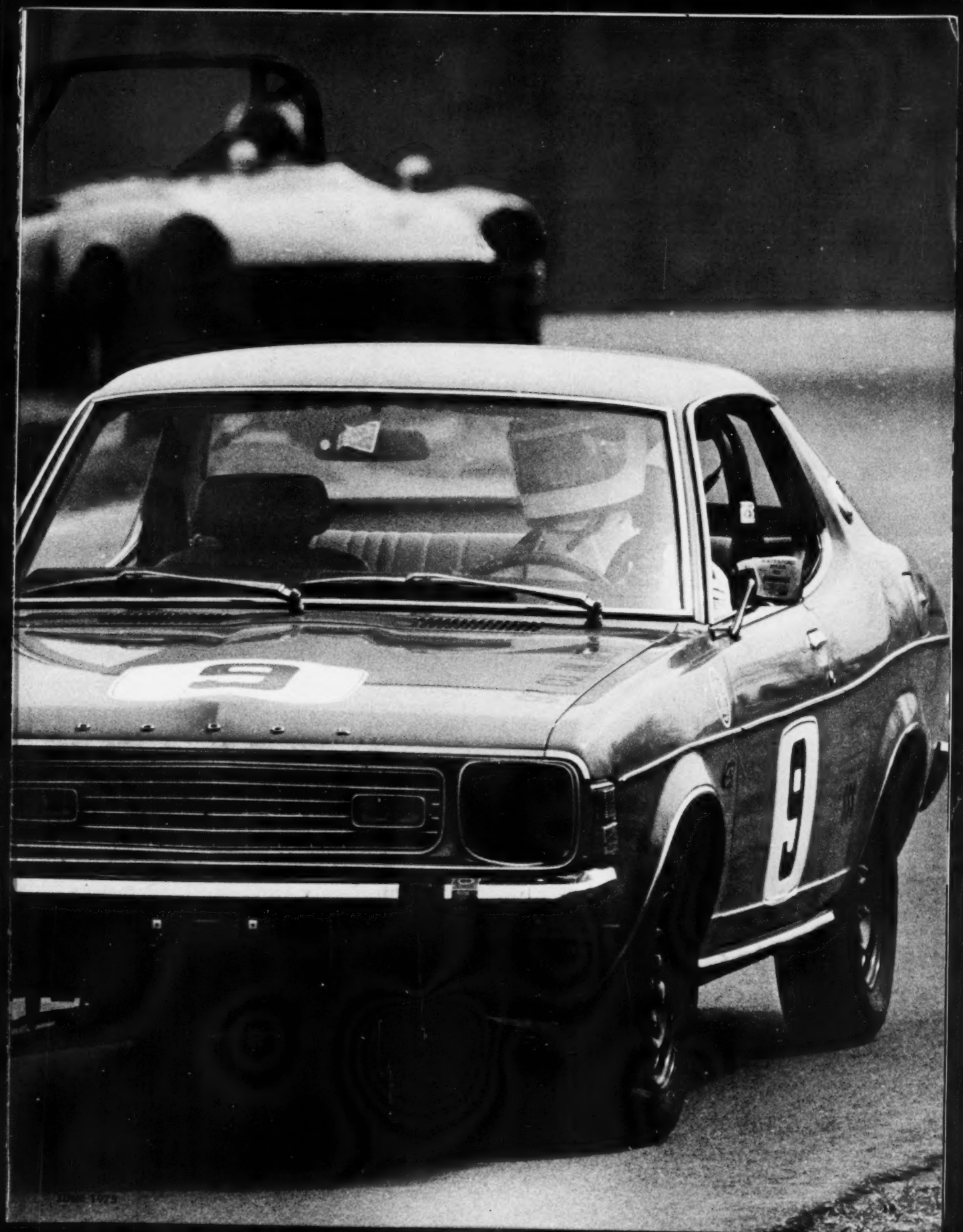
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The field at the start of a Showroom Stock race at beautiful Lime Rock, Connecticut.

continued
YOU CAN BE A ROAD-RACER

compact sedans, while Showroom Stock Sports Car (SSSC) is for small engined two-seaters.

Showroom Stock means just that. The cars must be raced exactly as the dealer delivered them. Modifications of any kind are strictly forbidden; this keeps costs down and ensures close racing. Also, the cars must be bottom-line models with no options that might affect performance; air conditioners and radios are OK, but you can't race a car with wide rims or optional rear-end ratios.

The one big advantage of these classes is that you don't need to own a single-purpose race car, plus another vehicle and a trailer for towing to the track, and yet another car to drive to work; one car does it all.

What cars are eligible to race Showroom Stock? First of all, only cars less than three years old are permitted. Here's a partial list of the more popular eligible cars; complete listings can be provided for a stamped, self-addressed envelope sent to the SCCA, P.O. Box 22476, Denver, Colorado 80222.

As with any other class of racing car, prepartion is all-important. But with Showroom Stock cars, prepara-

continued

SHOWROOM STOCK SEDANS

Audi Fox
Vega GT
Datsun B210, 610, 710
Colt
Mustang II
Pinto
Honda Civic
Opel 1900
Toyota Corolla
Toyota Corona
VW Rabbit, Super Beetle

SHOWROOM STOCK SPORTS CARS

Fiat X 1/9
124 Spider
MGB, MGB-GT
MG Midget
Opel Manta, GT
Porsche 914
Toyota Celica
Triumph GT-6
Spitfire 1500
VW Karmann Ghia

Typical way a Showroom Stock driver goes to the races. He unpacks the trunk, wraps everything in plastic in case it rains, then heads for the track! (Photo by author)

Correct tire pressure is important in every kind of driving. Smart street drivers carry their own gauge and don't rely on often inaccurate service station gauges. (Photo by Al Csiky)

Racing is serious business and calls for first-class protective gear. Note SCCA-approved competition roll bar, five-point aircraft-type single-release driver harness, full-coverage Snell-approved helmet, and Nomex fire-protection suit. (Photo by Al Csiky)

tion is centered almost totally on safety. There are three required modifications: first, the car must be equipped with an SCCA-approved competition roll bar. This will cost about $130. Next, a five-point, aircraft-type single release safety harness for the driver goes in ($60). Finally, a small fire extinguisher ($20) must be mounted within reach of the driver.

Your racing car must have numbers, and Showroom Stock cars are prohibited from having painted-on markings. The solution is self-adhesive vinyl. Buy the numbers and class markings or cut them out yourself, add two SCCA stickers and you're legal. Any other decorations are up to you.

Now, take off the hubcaps, remove the tools and jack, tape over the lights to keep broken glass off the track, and the car will be welcome on any road course in the country.

Once the car is ready for the track, the driver must properly equip himself. Here the requirements for the SS drivers are exactly the same as for any other racer: full fireproof Nomex jump suit, long johns, socks, and gloves are required. Leather street shoes may be worn, but many drivers prefer special fire-proof driving shoes. They are a special narrow design to keep your feet from hanging up in the pedals: try a few fast heel-and-toe downshifts in your funky bump-toes! And finally, a Snell Foundation-approved helmet tops off the well-dressed driver. All this personal equipment will cost between $150 and $200.

Now you have the basics, an SCCA-legal SS racer and driver. You could get your competition license and race at any road circuit in the country, from Watkins Glen to Riverside. But that's not quite all there is to making your budget racer a real threat for the checkered flag.

The single most important element of an SS race car is not the engine, but the tires. The SCCA allows the replacement of the stock tires with any 165-section tire, and steel-belted radials have proven to be the most successful. One trick available at this point, if you're really into it, is to have some of the tread shaved from new tires when they are originally mounted; this results in less tread squirm under hard cornering. And since the cars are so equal, every little advantage helps in SS racing.

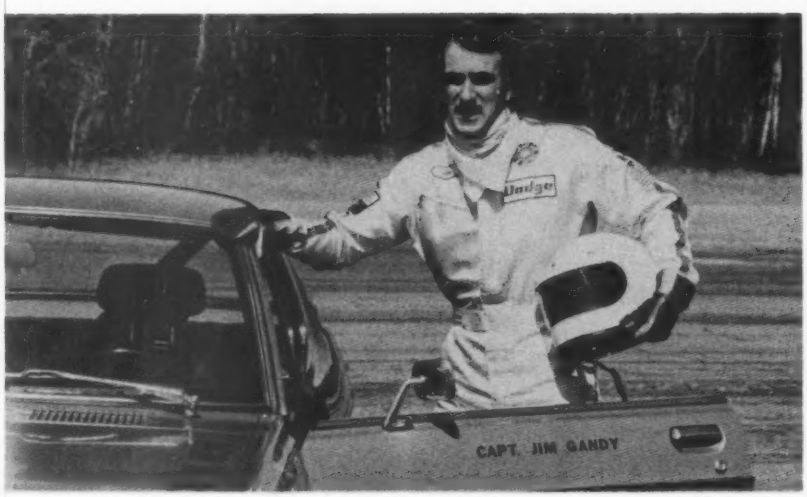
And of course you'll want to get the most out of the engine. Since modifications are out, you're faced with making those three squirrels harnessed under the hood of your mini-car sweat a little harder when you press the go-pedal. For a start, richen the fuel mixture slightly, buy the highest octane pump gas you find, and advance engine timing at least five degrees ahead of the street setting. (Remember to restore the stock settings for the street to meet emission requirements.) Your local drag strip is a great place to experiment with tuning for horsepower.

There are more completely legal "tricks of the trade" you can use when you prepare your SS racer, but what you already know will be enough to get you out on the track and running competitively. And that's the important thing—get out there and do it! For the price of an economy car plus five to six hundred dollars, you can be on your way to being the next Jackie Stewart! And no matter how much you decide to "get into it," you'll be a more confident, more skillful, and safer driver after your on-track experiences.

Ed Note: DRIVER has always been your magazine. But you, the reader, can make it even more your mag. Here's how. There's a lot going on out there that we don't know about—but you do. So we're doing this thing called "In the DRIVER's Seat." Its purpose—for you to let us and everyone else know what's happening.

If you've done something unusual in the way of autosports, safety, or in any area of interest to DRIVER readers, or know someone who has, let us know. We'd like to put one of you "in the DRIVER's seat" every month. Send your nominations for "In the DRIVER's Seat" to Editor, DRIVER Magazine, AFISC/SEDD, Norton AFB CA 92409.

IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT



CAPT JIM GANDY, USAF

Captain Jim Gandy of the 509th Civil Engineering Squadron at Pease AFB, New Hampshire, got his start in competitive motorsports through his wife. She had her heart set on owning a little red sports car, so in 1971 they bought a thoroughly clapped-out Spitfire and spent a year learning the joys and pains of sports cars.

The rigors of motoring in Montana were just too much for the Spitfire, so in 1972 it gave way to a brand-new Datsun 240Z. Part of the deal between Jim and Susan was that Jim would be able to use the car in slaloms for two years. So, when the Sports Car Club of Montana staged its first 1972 autocross, Jim put the Z-car through its paces. "We were running against the clock on a go-cart track," says Jim. "It was so tight I never got out of first gear, but I won a trophy in that first event and I've been hooked ever since."

That fall Jim was transferred to Austin, Texas, where he started running with the Texas Spokes Sports Car Club, one of the best autocross clubs in Texas. According to Jim, "Living in Central Texas was a great experience. There are active clubs all over, and you can autocross every weekend if you want to."

By 1973 Jim was the editor of the Spokes monthly magazine, capping the year by winning the Spokes Class 5 championship. Running his wife's 240Z against Corvettes, Porsches and Panteras, he went out and won the Roses.

1974 brought a PCS to Pease AFB along with the end of his two year "lease" on the 240Z. Feeling ready to try road racing, he bought a Dodge Colt and prepared it for Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) Showroom Stock Sedan class in the tough New England Region.

"Competition is really tough up here. But it's the best way to learn the limits of yourself and your car on the track," says Gandy.

Besides earning his competition license from the SCCA, Jim's 1974 road racing record shows 11 races with no DNFs.* His one win came at

**"Did not finishes."*

Aspen, Colorado, during a racing vacation that included competition in Texas and two races in Seattle. He ended the season by finishing 17th out of 51 entries at the third annual **CAR and DRIVER** Showroom Stock Sedan Challenge race at Lime Rock, Connecticut.

In between racing and his Industrial Engineer duties, Jim found time to organize a base sports car club at Pease. The Pease Auto Club is now heading into its second full year of activities, with 20 slaloms and a half-dozen rallies under its belt.

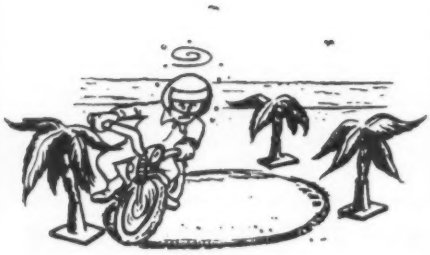
"I really feel my competition activities have made me a much better all-around driver," says Jim. "As a matter of fact, I don't drive nearly as aggressively on the street as I used to. If I feel that I have to prove something, I do it on the track. I use my street driving to sharpen the qualities that make a winner: Smoothness and quick reflexes."

Jim is looking forward to more races and slaloms in 1975. 1976, however, will be different as Jim will serve an unaccompanied remote. "I hope to spend one more year learning in the Colt," he says, "and then come back from my remote assignment ready to seriously campaign a car either for an SCCA championship or a try at one of the smaller professional series."

(below)
Jim Gandy at the wheel of his wife's Datsun 240Z at a dual course autocross in Austin, Texas. Cars compete side-by-side on identical but separate courses. Sponsors are available even for slalom cars.
(Photo by Ed Stewart)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BACKFIRE



ON GUAM IT'S TOUGH!

You said lately that a guy can hop on a bike and practice for half an hour and pass the motorcycle license test just about anywhere. Obviously you've never been to Guam.

When I bought a motorcycle here, I passed the written test with flying colors (I've got 20,000 miles under my belt—both on- and off-road riding in Michigan and Alaska). Then it came to the road test and I flunked royally. What's worse, I consider myself a pretty darned good rider—not the best, but then who is the best, right?

Believe it or not, this is the road test for a motorcycle license on Guam: The first thing you have to do is go through about 15 pylons which are spaced approximately three feet apart. This I passed. Next came a lulu. You have about 20 feet that you have to take a minimum of 20 seconds to travel without putting your feet on the ground or wobbling the bike. IF you pass this, then the next step is the circle eights. You have to do two circle eights in a row without touching your feet to the ground or wobbling the bike in an area not a heck of a lot bigger than it takes to do one circle eight turning your handlebars as far as they will go in each turn.

IF you pass that, there's one more. Are you ready? Take your bike and turn it (the handlebars) as much to the left as it will go. Now go around in one full circle with the bike. Add about six inches on to this all the way around and that's how you have to do three complete circles to the left without touching your feet to the ground or wobbling.

After I failed the test several times, I talked to a friend who is a professional moto-cross racer. The only way he passed the test was by borrowing a friend's 90 cc instead of using his 360 for the test, and then he practiced each maneuver carefully in advance . . .

When I see some of the weirdos they license for the driver's seats of cars, it makes me wonder. . . .

DK3 Eric J. Schuman
US NAVFINO
FPO San Francisco 96630

These very slow riding exercises are part of every basic motorcycle course. The idea is that if you can do them you have fairly good control of yourself and the machine.

BENDING THE RULES

My comment about Lt Rinker's generally excellent article ("Cycle," Feb '75) concerns an often seen "rule" of motorcycle safety which says, "ride in the left wheel track of the rightmost traffic lane." Now, there are good reasons for this rule that apply to city traffic and freeway riding, but blind adherence has killed two riders that I know of personally and both deaths occurred in the same small county in New Mexico.

One of the two accidents illustrates the danger perfectly. The rider, following the "rule," was riding on a two-lane road approaching an area where the road entered a narrow canyon. Notice that on a two-lane road, the rule places the rider near the centerline of the road. A school bus, going 10 mph under the speed limit, emerged from the canyon and approached the rider. Just as the bus was meeting the rider, a car closely following the bus pulled into the motorcyclist's lane to pass the bus. Even though the passing car was moving *across* the centerline relatively slowly, the *closing speed* was so great that the cyclist had no time to react and was struck. Even if a rider in this circumstance is on a road too narrow to avoid the passing vehicle, legs up and over the guard rail is a lot better than a head-on collision with a car.

So, the exception to the rule is: If oncoming traffic might use your lane to pass, ride all the way to the right.

Major John Dean
AF Rocket Propulsion Lab
Edwards, CA 93523

HIGH PERFORMANCE DRIVING

I have been one of your avid readers for a long time. My interest stems from our common objectives in addition to the obvious—yours is an outstanding publication.

Having returned only recently from a field inspection tour, I found time to catch up on my reading, including recent issues of DRIVER, and congratulate you and Dave Sexton on January's thorough story on the Bondurant School of High Performance Driving.

Subsequent to my completion of Bob Bondurant's special branch of driver torture in 1972, I publicly stated that every driver education teacher in our public schools should have this training. Surely, better and safer drivers would populate our streets with a resultant decline in accidents and fatalities.

Mr. Richard L. Spears, General Manager
National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC 20594

BUYER BEWARE

In reference to your article, "Buying A Used Car," in the January issue, I would like to offer a few comments. I just purchased a used 1974 Chevrolet Caprice that had 12,043 miles on it and had been traded in at the deal-

Address your letters to:
Editor
DRIVER Magazine
AFISC/SEDD
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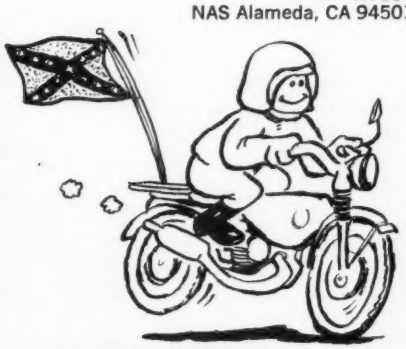
ership where it was originally sold as a new car.

In checking the car, I followed the guide in your article which I found most helpful and useful. The one area that I neglected to really check and which was not stressed in the article was the trunk. Considering the outstanding condition of this car and the fact that it was less than a year old, I did not expect any problems.

Much to my surprise, after the first rains I found enough water in the trunk to take a bath. Since I was past the 30-day warranty from the dealer, he refused to touch it. I contacted the factory representative, who also would not fix it, even though it was obvious to everybody that the condition existed because the body had been put together improperly during manufacture.

Warn your readers that even with the best of products, dealers, and companies, they should check items thoroughly because once the warranty is up, dealers and manufacturers do not stand behind their product.

ADCS L. A. Raye
VA-304
NAS Alameda, CA 94501



LICENSING QUESTION

Being a devout Southerner, I couldn't resist questioning one of your recent articles. In "Licensing Motorcyclists," Feb '75 DRIVER, you indicate that Alabama does not require special licensing or tests. Unless laws have changed recently, this is incorrect. Alabama requires a motorcycle license and static cycle test for riders between the ages of 14 and 16.

I am 27 and have been riding since I was 15 and I sure remember sweating out that test and checkout. I don't remember if I took an on-road test though—it was too long ago. At 16 years of age you can get an Alabama automobile license that covers both cars and motorcycles. I appreciate your magazine and am wondering if there is any way that I can get the publication after I am out of the service.

AT-2 Joel A. Newell
USS F. D. Roosevelt (CVA-42)
FPO New York 09501

There's a good chance that Alabama motorcycle laws have changed several times since you took the test. In the past, state motorcycle laws and regulaions changed so frequently that even motorcycle groups and federal agencies had trouble keeping up with the changes. Every time we publish a list of state motorcycle laws we receive numerous letters disagreeing with some of the information. However, this article was based on a survey in which every state was contacted directly. So unless laws in some of the states changed from the time of the survey to the time of publication, we believe this information to be basically accurate. DRIVER subscription information is contained in the information block at the bottom of page 2 of every issue.

WHY DON'T THEY . . .?

Military people are continually exposed to driving safety programs. All good. So you can't figure out why you're in your car trying to make it to work on a foggy morning on icy streets in freezing drizzle. Since most accidents happen within 25 miles of home, why isn't a plan implemented to tell people to stay at home and off the roads in weather like that?

Take this situation: March 11th in Colorado Springs. Four military posts with several thousand employees. "Precious lives, valuable personnel resources" the safety programs call

them. The radio is giving warnings about icy streets, poor visibility, and treacherous driving conditions. But people are proceeding to Ft. Carson, Peterson, etc., for work as usual. Why?

No one has bothered to tell people to stay at home until conditions improve. As we make our way toward work, we hear on the radio about multi-car pile-ups and roads closed due to snarled traffic. Not until too late does the radio announce that Ft. Carson has closed its gates. By this time everybody is already on the road fending his way toward a destination that is now closed. Now we come upon a congestion and after 15 minutes we pass three cars that have rear-ended, with other vehicles off the road trying to avoid the mess . . .

This happens only half a dozen times a winter here. But in how many other locations in the U.S. does it happen also? If we are so interested in safety, why can't we notify people to stay home when the weather is so bad? *Before* they are already in their cars.

Charles Johnson
Colorado Sprngs, CO 80907

This is a complicated problem and one we have often talked about here at DRIVER. We would like to hear from any base that has a plan to keep their people off the road in really dangerous weather.

and the Coast Guard Auxiliary instruct, inspect and rescue; they also enforce the rules and give warnings and tickets just as dry-land patrolmen do.

Because about one in three boating accidents happens to fishermen and hunters, the Coast Guard Auxiliary is now offering a one-lesson course entitled "Basic Boating for Hunters and Fishermen." Check your phone book and call them for the time and place. If you are interested in more comprehensive courses, you'll find them, too.

To be really sure that your boat and equipment meet the minimum safety requirements, ask for a free Coast Guard Auxiliary Courtesy Examination. The Auxiliarist will examine your boat for compliance with federal regulations and certain additional recommendations which the Auxiliary considers desirable for your safety. If your boat passes, a current Courtesy Examination Decal will be placed on the boat. Unless you are obviously violating the law, Coast Guard Boating Safety Detachments (which patrol recreational waters) normally will not board your vessel if it displays the decal.

If your boat doesn't pass the exam, don't be alarmed. A report will be given to you indicating the areas in which the boat and equipment were found deficient, but no record of the examination is made and no report is made to any law enforcement agency including the Coast Guard.

ABOUT MISS DRIVER

Petite, brown-haired Lynn Toscano is studying music and dance and hopes to become a dance teacher. Her hobbies include horseback riding, gardening, and growing indoor plants. Lynn also appeared on television's "The Dating Game." The 23-year-old student has been driving for five years and firmly believes that driving defensively has kept her out of road mishaps.

Water skiing isn't as hard as it looks but it takes practice. Note the Personal Flotation Devices.

The diver's flag is appearing more frequently on our waters. It has a red-orange background with a white diagonal stripe from top left to bottom right corner. When you see it flying from a boat, or from a float, don't approach too closely or attempt to pass between the flag and the nearby shore. This flag means there are divers down in the area and it tells you to keep clear.

PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICES

The Coast Guard classifies Personal Floation Devices (PFDs) into four types:

Type I is any approved wearable device designed to *turn* an unconscious person in the water from a face down position to a vertical or slightly backward position, and to have more than 20 pounds of buoyance. Recommended for offshore cruising.

Type II is the same kind of device, with at least 15.5 pounds of buoyancy and is recommended for closer inshore cruising.

A Type III PFD has the same buoyancy as a Type II but it has less turning movement and is designed to protect a *conscious* person. It is more comfortable to wear and is particularly useful when water skiing, hunting, fishing or sailing.

A Type IV PFD is any approved device designed to be *thrown* to a person in the water. It is not worn.

All recreational boats less than 16 feet in length, and all canoes and kayaks must have one Type I, II, III, or IV device aboard for each person.

All recreational boats 16 feet in length and over must have one Type I, II, or III device aboard for each person and, in addition, one throwable Type IV device.

Prudent boatmen generally carry more PFDs than they expect to need. PFDs should be worn by all hands when boating conditions are hazardous, and by children and nonswimmers at all times while under way.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Even though there is far more to know about boating sports than could be mentioned in these few pages, the terrific thing is that there is so much excellent information and instruction available for the taking. From the Coast Guard Auxiliary, from state governments, from community colleges, from private clubs. Even from the shelf of your local library. All you have to do is reach for it.

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"You know, I just heard that those flares you carry in your car for emergencies can really be dangerous. In fact, people have even set their car on fire with flares. Well I don't need that, so I ran out and got some of these new emergency triangles. Why don't you check out "On And Off The Beaten Path" on page 1 for more info on these handy triangles and some words about the right things to do in case of a road emergency."

FITS ALL SIZES

(saves all sizes, too)

BUCKLEUP!